

K Friends

P A Y I N G

T Y T H E S

I N C O N S I S T E N T

W I T H

The P R I N C I P L E S

O F

The People called Q U A K E R S.

Wherein the Reasons for their Refusal are briefly stated; the Pleas and Excuses made by some for complying with Demands of that Nature, are considered and refuted; as also the Discipline of the Society which requires dealing with, and finally censuring those who will not be reclaimed, vindicated.

D U B L I N :

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Globe in Meatb-street. 1774.

PAYING
THEY
THE
INCONSISTENT
WITH

THE PRINCIPLES

ALFRED



The People

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DUBLIN:

Printed and sold by ROBERT JACKSON at the
No. 10. Pall Mall.

THE P R E F A C E.

To the READER,

THE Author although not in the least conscious, of having advanced any Thing, in the ensuing Tract inconsistent with Gospel Doctrine, or that he hath Occasion to be ashamed of, yet chuses (at present) for some Reasons, not to publish his Name with it; one of which he may mention, *viz.* He cannot quite reconcile himself to subscribe as Author of the Whole; seeing a considerable Part of it, hath been furnished by some of his Friends, which at divers Times he received in Letters on this Subject; and which he judged so pertinent to the Matters treated of, that he took the Liberty to make Use of them, solely with a View to the lasting Benefit of such, for whose Sake he undertook this Labour. And let its Success be what it may, he will have the Satisfaction of having attempted to shew the "*Fearful and Unbelieving,*" the great Inconsistency of professing Truth in Words, and establishing Error by their Practice.

PREFACE

To the Reader,

THE Author although not in the least conscious of having advanced any Thing, in the ensuing Treatise inconsistent with Gospel Doctrine, or that he hath Occasion to be ashamed of, yet chooses (at present) for some Reasons; not to publish his Name without; one of which he may mention. He cannot quite reconcile himself to subscribe as Author of the Whole; feeling a considerable Part of it, hath been furnished by some of his Friends, which at divers Times he received in Letters on this subject; and which he judged to be pertinent to the Matters treated of, that he took the Liberty to make Use of them, solely with a View to the lasting Benefit of such, for whose Sake he undertook this Labour. And let his Friends be what it may, he will have the Satisfaction of having attempted to show the World, and Church, the great Inconsistency of professing Christian Words, and establishing Error by their Practice.

PAYING
TYTHES
INCONSISTENT
WITH

The PRINCIPLES

OF
The People called QUAKERS.

The Reasons for refusing to pay Tythes briefly stated.

THE Faithfulness of Friends in maintaining the several Branches of our Christian Testimony, is of such Concern and Importance to our religious Society, and I have been so often sorrowfully affected with the Consideration of the sad Effects of the Unfaithfulness of some, in letting fall our ancient christian Testimony against the antichristian Yoke of Tythes, that I am engaged to recite the principal Reasons, why Friends refuse to pay this or other Demands of the same Nature, to answer the Excuses and Pleas of Tythe-payers, and to offer some Observations

Observations upon the Discipline, needful to be extended towards them ; in Order that all concerned, and especially the rising Youth, might be assisted to form a right Judgement in this Affair, lest any of them should be led thro' the contagious Influence of the ill Example of some, who are more advanced in Years, to glide unhappily into a Defection from our ancient Christian Testimony, without entering deeply enough into the Consideration of the Subject.

Friends refuse to pay Tythes for Conscience Sake.

I.

Because, Tythes, considered merely as not being freewill Offerings, but exacted of the People by Force of human Laws, are a Maintenance not suitable to the Nature of the Gospel Dispensation, unworthy the Ministers thereof, and directly repugnant to the exprefs Commands of our Lord and Lawgiver, who, when he sent forth his Disciples to preach, gave them in Charge ; * *“ Freely ye have received, freely give,”* we read † also, that it was the Doctrine and Practice of the Apostles, and primitive Christian Ministers, to preach the Gospel freely, without coveting any Man's Gold, or Silver, or Apparel ; and we believe the Gospel ought to be always so preached ; and know that it is so preached among us, by those who have freely received a Gift of the Ministry. Therefore, a Com-

* Mat. 10. 8. † Acts 20. 33, 35. i. Thes. 2. 9. ii. Thes. 3. 7, 8. i. Cor. 9. 18, 19. i. Pet. 5. 2, 3.

a Compliance with the Payment of Tythes is a denying the Freedom of the Gospel, or that it ought to be freely preached, without any View of Reward from Man.

II.

Because, Tythes, being a Part of the Ceremonial Law of *Moses*, as fully appears from their * being offered, by the *Jews*, as an Heave-offering unto the Lord, the paying or receiving them is turning again to the weak and beggarly Elements, and a submitting to the Ceremonial Law, and Yoke of Bondage, which was laid upon the *Jews* to be observed, and borne by them in the Land of *Canaan*, until the *Messiah* came, whom they were to hear in all Things. But we are now commanded † to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith *Christ* has made us free, and not to be again entangled with the Yoke of Bondage.

III.

Because the Ceremonial Law, and consequently Tythes which were a Part thereof, being abrogated by the coming and suffering of *Christ* in the Flesh; to pay or receive Tythes under the Gospel, is to be actively concerned in supporting that which was to be done away by the coming of *Christ*; and by Actions, which speak louder than Words, to deny, at least implicitly,

* Num. 18. 24. † Gal. 5. 1.

plicitly, that Christ is come in the Flesh; and therefore such Payment is of * Antichrist. For if † there be not a Change in the Law, then the Priesthood of *Aaron* remaineth; and if that Priesthood remain, then Christ is not yet come. ‡ The Law was a School-Master unto Christ, and after Faith is come, we are no longer under a School-Master ||. If we must still be in Bondage under the Elements of the World, then God hath not yet sent forth his Son.

IV.

Because the first Introducers of Tythes into the christian Church, founding their Authority upon the Law of *Moses*, pleaded that the tenth Part of the yearly increase of the Lands, Cattle, and Industry of the People was due to Gospel Ministers now, as to the Jewish Priests formerly, by divine Right: And the Laws of *England*, now in Force to compel the Payment thereof, were founded and established upon the Supposition, that it was, and is so due to Christ's Ministers for the necessary Support of his Church. And therefore the active Payment of Tythes, acknowledges the divine Title by which they are claimed, and recovered by Law, justifies the Laws which compel the Payment, and attributes to the meek Author of the Christian Religion, all the Persecutions and Cruelties that have been acted under Pretence of supporting his Church.

V. Be-

* i. John 4. 3. † Heb. 7. 12. ‡ Gal. 3. 24, 25.
|| Compare Gal. 4. 3, 5,

V.

Because Tythes sprung up, and were established in the darkest Time of Popish Superstition, by Authority of the Pope, in Opposition to the Precepts and Practice of Christ, of his Apostles, and of the primitive Ministers of his Church. And therefore to pay Tythes actively, is to own and submit to the antichristian and unjust Dominion, which the Pope and his Clergy first found Means to usurp, over the Conscience and Property of a blind and superstitious People, and which the Clergy of the Church of *England* still continue to exercise in a more enlightened Age, wherein many, more clearly see, and sensibly feel the Yoke of the Imposition, than have the Courage to withstand it openly.

VI.

Because Tythes are exacted for the Use of maintaining a Worship, and a Ministry, which stand upon the Authority of Man, and not upon the Authority of God and his Christ: And whose Offices are too generally undertaken from Motives of Gain or worldly Views. But we believe none to be true Ministers of Christ, but those who have freely received of him a Gift of the Ministry: And that such are bound to preach the Gospel freely, of pure Love of God and Souls, without the least View of Reward from Man. Therefore, whoever of us pays Tythes, the same helpeth to support a Man-made Ministry, that preaches

10 *The Reasons for refusing to pay Tythes, &c.*

for Hire, and divines for filthy Lucre: And to maintain it against the free Ministry of the Gospel.

VII.

Because, it is said, * "*Let every Man be fully persuaded in his own Mind.*" For whatsoever is not of Faith, is Sin. But we are fully persuaded, for the Reasons aforesaid, that we ought not to pay Tythes: And believe that the National Ministers have no just Right to them. Therefore, to us it would be a Sin to pay them Tythes.

VIII.

Because, we are fully persuaded, that the Lord hath called his People to bear a faithful Testimony for the Freedom of the Gospel, against this antichristian Yoke of Bondage. Because we know, that to pay Tythes, would be to undervalue, to act contrary to, and to censure those faithful Witnesses of the Truth, who have borne and suffered, for this their Testimony such great Losses, Imprisonments, and even Death. And because we see by Experience, that Unfaithfulness strengthens the Hands of the Persecutors, adds to the Sufferings of honest Friends, and hinders the Persons own Growth, and Prosperity in the blessed Truth.

Having thus briefly given the chief Heads of the Reasons, why Friends refuse to pay Tythes; which
Reasons

* Rom. 14. 5, 13.

Reasons appear so weighty to the sensible and truly religious amongst us, that they have ever found it to be their Place to bear this Testimony faithfully, and not to depart therefrom through Fear of suffering, or any other Motive. I shall now proceed to consider, and answer the Reasons, or rather Excuses, which our Tythe-payers usually have recourse unto, to vindicate or excuse their Compliance with the Payment of Tythes, in Opposition to the Sense and Judgement of the Body, and the professed Principles of the Society, whereof they are willing to be accounted Members.

The Pleas and Excuses for paying Tythes, considered and refuted.

Excuse I.

They alledge, that the Scriptures * “ Put us in
“ Mind to be subject to Principalities and Powers;
“ to obey Magistrates; and † to submit ourselves to
“ every Ordinance of Man for the Lord’s Sake; ‡
“ for there is no Power, but of God; and the
“ Powers that be, are ordained of God; whosoever
“ therefore resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordi-
“ nance of God.” Now as the Powers that be, have
thought fit to enact or continue certain Laws, by
which the Parsons of the several Parishes in *England*
are entitled to demand, and recover the Tythes of
their respective Parishioners; are we not bound by
these Scriptures to obey?

Answer.

* Tit. 3. 1. † i. Pet. 2. 13. ‡ Rom. 13. 1.

Answer.

In general, and in all Things not against Conscience, we are bound to obey the Laws of the Land; but whenever it happens, that any such Law clashes with the Law of God, we ought surely, in such Cases, to obey God, rather than Man; and even our Lawyers * allow, that no human Laws are of any Validity, if contrary to the Law of God, for God is the highest Power, and no Law of Man can excuse us in his Sight, if we do any Thing which we know or believe is contrary to his divine Will. Now the Body of sincere Friends, have always found the Law of God forbid them to pay Tythes, or in any Shape to help to support this Antichristian Yoke in these Gospel Times; yet they passively obey, submit to, and fulfil the Law, by suffering the Penalty annexed to it with Meekness and Patience; which is all the Obedience that Scripture, or the Reason of the Thing, requires in this Case: Thus they resist not the Powers that be, but submit themselves to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake, and at the same Time preserve the Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man; and similar hereto was the Conduct of the Servants of God formerly. *Shedrach, Mesbach and Abednego*, refused to Worship the Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* set up; and *Daniel* desisted not three Times a Day to pray, and give Thanks before his

* See our present Judge *Blackstone's* Commentaries on the Law of England, Vol 1. p. 41 and 57.

his God, during the thirty Days prohibited by *Darius*, as he did aforetime; and this behaviour, tho' in both Instances directly contrary to the Decree of a mighty and despotic King, was approved in the Sight of God as is evident from their miraculous Deliverance *.

I would observe further, that the Claimants of Tythes, cannot derive the Property they pretend to have in them from the Laws of the Land; for the Law gives no Man a Property in any Thing. It only provides Remedies to secure and recover to every Man that Property, which he has acquired in the Thing contested, by some other lawful Means, as by Gift, Purchase, or Inheritance; and in Relation to Tythes, it takes it for granted they are due to God and holy Church, and upon that mistaken Supposition has made ample Provision for the Recovery of the Tythes, which

* The Plea of making human Laws, however repugnant to the Law of God, the Rule of our Obedience; at once condemns most of the Martyrs and Sufferers, on Account of Religion; and is so absurd in itself, that it is not worth a refutation; yet I would observe that many, (as appears by the Ecclesiastical Histories of this Nation), suffered much for their Conscientious Refusal to pay Tythes, as also, on Account of another antichristian popish Demand, called Peter-pence, before we as a People were in Being: Let me likewise add *Cave's* Account in his Primitive Christianity, Part 3rd, Page 327, that the Christians of those Times, refused to pay Taxes rated upon them for the Maintenance of the Heathen Temples.

which the Claimant or some Body for him, testifies to be due to him. How that is proved, is to themselves. We, who believe Tythes are an Antichristian Yoke, first imposed on the People by the Pope's Authority, are fully perswaded we owe them to no Man, neither in Equity nor by any Law of God: And therefore we can do no otherwise than to refuse the Payment, because our Compliance therewith would allow the divine Right, on which the Power of Recovery is grounded, and justify the Law in compelling the Payment, on that Bottom. How therefore can any Member of the Society, who is honest in his Enquiries, and carefully weighs the Reasons why faithful Friends refuse to pay Tythes, make himself easy in a Practice so repugnant to the professed Principles thereof?

Excuse II.

Had the three Jews conformed to the Decree of *Nebuchadnezzar*, they would have been guilty of downright Idolatry. But the Payment of Tythes is of another Nature; it regards only our outward Substance; and whether we pay or refuse, it infringes not on the Conscience. May we not therefore testify our Disapprobation of Tythes, and at the same Time conform to the Law of the Land?

Answer.

Whoever sees Tythes to be a jewish, or a popish, or an antichristian Imposition, and yet pays them; the

the same conforms to what he believes to be an Evil : And all such Conformity must infringe upon, and wound a tender Conscience : Otherwise the three Jews might have obeyed in Form, though not in Heart, and so have escaped their fiery Trial. The Motive for desiring to conform to the Law we dissent from in our Hearts, is mostly the Fear of the Penalty annexed to the breach of it ; and the Man, who, through such Fear obeys the Commands of Men against his Conscience ; doth manifestly prefer the Law of Man before the Law of God. The Payment of Tythes, must of Necessity affect the Conscience of every sincere Member of our Society, because he would thereby assent to the Claimant's Title. The Actions of Men speak louder and plainer than their Words : And therefore to declare a Dissent in Words, while we conform in Acts, is not bearing a faithful Testimony ; but mere Collusion and Hypocrisy ; and can no more be reconciled with Truth, than a Proposal to serve God and Mammon.

Excuse III.

If an active Compliance with Evil always implies an Approbation thereof, then we approve the Act of an Highway-man, when we deliver our Money upon his Demand ; and we ought rather refuse being active, but only passively suffer him to take it, though by such Procedure we should expose Life to greater Danger.

Answer.

Answer.

The Cases are not parallel. The Highway-man pretends no Right to what he takes, but if convicted, commonly acknowledges the Justice of the Punishment he incurs; and no ill Consequence arises from complying with his unjust Demands, further than the Loss of the Money, nor good from refusing to deliver. But in the Case of Tythes, certain Men have made a Claim to them, to the Prejudice of true Religion, under the mistaken Notion that Religion required such a Maintenance: And therefore it becomes the Duty of those, to whom the Mistake is peculiarly manifested, to bear a faithful Testimony against the Payment, in Order that the Understanding of the Ignorant may be informed, the important Mistake be rectified, and the Aspersions which it hath cast on the Christian Religion, be removed.

Excuse IV.

Why then do not Friends also Scruple to pay the King's Taxes, seeing it is known that the Money raised is often applied to the Uses of War, which is as contrary to our Principles, as paying Tythes?

Answer.

When our Saviour was asked, whether it was lawful to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*, he answered; "*Render to Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's, and to*
God"

“ God *the Things that are God's*. And at another Time to pay Tribute, he directed *Peter* to take the Fish that first came up, and give the Money found in its Mouth for him and *Peter*. Thus by Precept and Example of Christ himself, are we required to pay Tribute to *Cæsar*; for if it was due to an Heathen Prince, it surely is no less so to those professing Christianity. And here is a Gospel Authority for Tribute to Princes, which the Claimants of Tythe have not, as to the Uses the Money is applied to, we are not responsible, as we have no Share in the Administration.

Excuse V.

But is it not prudent to commit a small Evil to avoid a greater? And is it not better to pay the Demand, than by provoking a captious Priest to run the Hazard of bringing a Family into Poverty or great Sufferings?

Answer.

The Apostle *Paul* thus queries, shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound? God forbid; and moreover our blessed Saviour, whose voluntary Sufferings for us ought well to be considered, has declared, that whatsoever Men should part with for his Sake and the Gospel's, they should receive in this World an hundredfold, and in that which is to come eternal Life. Is it then reasonable for us to rely on our own Policy, rather than upon the Lord's gracious Promises?

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mises? By such a Proceedure we shall stain our Profession, and bring Reproach upon the Gospel, by allowing that the forced Maintenance of those called the Clergy, is consistent with Christianity: For Tythes are not, nor can be, claimed upon any other Bottom.

And further to explain the Present Subject, let the following Queries and Answers be well considered.

Query I.

Are the Laws for the Recovery of Tythes consistent with Christianity?

Answer.

The Fruits of these Laws clearly evince, that they cannot be pleasing to Christ, who commanded his Ministers to give freely, as they had freely received. And whosoever now claims Tythes, or complies with such Claim, not only acts contrary to Christ's Commands, but revives again the Levitical Law, which he abrogated, and thereby implicitly denies that Christ is come in the Flesh. See the three first Reasons for refusing the Payment, and *Thomas Elwood's* Account of Tythes in general, and also *A Pearson's* great Case of Tythes.

Query

Query II.

Doth an active Compliance with an antichristian Law, make the Person complying an Accessary thereto, and a Sharer in the Consequences that may naturally arise from it?

Answer.

As we are answerable to God for all our Actions, it is not lawful for us to consent to any Thing that is contrary to his Witness in the Conscience, and to the Holy Scriptures, We are not however to refuse paying any Man that which he has a just Right to, on Pretence we know or believe he will apply it to an ill Purpose; For we owe it him, and if we have no Right or Power over his Actions, we are not accountable for them. If a Demand is made upon us by a Title that is not good, while we are ignorant of this Circumstance, and believe the Demand is due from us, we are bound in Conscience to pay it, until we come to discover the Imposition, but no longer. If, after we are convinced of the Badness of the Title, we continue to pay, we do Injustice to ourselves. If our Neighbours labour under the same Imposition without knowing it, we, to whom it is discovered, are bound to give them due Information thereof: Otherwise, if we neglect this necessary Duty, and still contribute to support the Claim of the Imposer by paying it; we do injustice to ourselves to our Neighbours, and to the Witness of God in the Con-

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science,

science, and make ourselves Accessary to the Imposition, and therefore become accountable for the Consequences. And the Case becomes more serious and important, in Proportion to the Extensiveness and Injury of the Imposition. But we, as a People peculiarly favoured both with a free Ministry among ourselves, and with a clear Sight of the Nature of the grand Antichristian Yoke of Tythes, imposed on us to maintain a hireling Ministry; which not only takes unjustly from numerous Bodies of People, a large Portion of their Property without giving them an Equivalent, but also (which is worse) greatly hinders their growth in real Religion, and reflects Dishonour upon God and Christ: We, who know that it was in the dark Times of popish Superstition, the People were first made to believe themselves bound to pay Tythes, through the Craft of Priests, and their own Ignorance; that the Claim has not any other more solid Foundation, notwithstanding it is so pompously demanded as due by divine Right, and the Law of the Land; and that this Belief of an Obligation to pay Tythes, doth and can subsist only through the Continuance of the same Causes that gave it Birth, and therefore cannot stand and abide the Light: We, who are favoured to have our Judgements thus clearly convinced of the Imposition, and of the evil Nature of it, ought certainly not to be silent, but to unite close together, and with one accord bear a faithful Testimony against it, for the Truth's Sake, and for the People's Sake. This is the plain Way to inform their Judgements, and remove their Ignorance, that they also may see the Imposition as it is; the unfaithful

ful Members who drop their Testimony, and contribute to keep up the Imposition by complying with the Demand, are justly chargeable with keeping the World in Ignorance: And that very many People are in Ignorance respecting this Matter, is evident to every Observer. In this Age, which is so far enlightened, that a divine Right to Tythes is disavowed in a pretty general Way, many Men are become so uneasy with the worldly Inconveniences of the Imposition, as to wish for a Repeal of the Tythe Laws! Who yet believe the Claimants have at present a just Title by Law, and therefore not only pay them as a just Debt, but are ready to censure the Quakers who do not observe these Laws, instead of shewing Tenderness to them in their Sufferings — Which doth not so much proceed from Want of Compassion, as from their Ignorance of the Foundation of the Quakers conscientious Scruples, and from a mistaken Opinion thence arising that these Sufferings might have been honestly avoided. Hence one weighty Use of our Testimony against Tythes, is to put the Ignorant upon an Enquiry into our Reasons, whereby they may come to a right Understanding of the Case; and then such Sufferings will not appear needless, but highly necessary and honourable, and many of those whose Eyes are thus opened, may probably find it their Duty to join with us in bearing a Testimony for the Freedom of the Gospel, against this antichristian Imposition.

It is therefore not enough to say, that any Man, using his Reason, may, by reading Friend's Books on
the

the Subject, be convinced of the Inconsistency of Tythes with the Christian Religion. Men look more at our Actions, than at our Words, and with Reason; for Actions as they cost more, are more valuable, and preach better than Words, which alone are but empty Sound. We ought to shew the Way, and to be as Lights and as Waymarks to the World. The faithful Testimony born by our Predecessors, doubtless tended greatly to weaken the Foundation of this Yoke, and was the instrumental Means of convincing some of the Necessity of suffering whatsoever the Imposer should be permitted to inflict, rather than consent to the Payment. As they convinced some, our Perseverance in the same Faithfulness is the Way to convince others; and a Continuation thereof in a gradual Progression lays a substantial Hope, for a compleat Deliverance in due Time. And let it be remembered by all concerned, that as we of the present Age, who are Members of the same Body, partake of the Benefit that has arisen from the Persecutions and heavy Sufferings, of those who at first made so noble a Stand for Liberty; so we are in Proportion, affected by the disorderly Walking of unfaithful Brethren, who are undoing what the others have done. The Body not only loses the Assistance of these unfaithful Members in carrying on the Work, but must abide their real Opposition: For in this Case, where there is a Necessity of declaring by Actions for or against the Claim, a Man cannot be neuter. The unfaithful act in Conjunction with our Adversaries; and we may say, from sad Experience, they have been more injurious to our Cause, and
helpful

helpful to their's, than the most powerful of our declared Opposers: So true it is, that a Man's most dangerous Enemies are those of his own Household.

Query III.

Is it reasonable or consistent with the Nature of Membership, that a Man should take upon himself, to act contrary to the fundamental Principles and Rules of the Society, or Body, of which he is, or desires to continue a Member?

Answer.

No more than it is reasonable for the Hand to deliver to an Adversary, a Weapon to wound the Body of which it is a Member: In the natural Body, we see, every Member labours wonderfully for the good and wellbeing of the Whole; and will readily suffer for the Sake thereof, when there is Occasion: Thus if the Eye sees a Sword aiming at the Body, the Hand will instantly receive it, and suffer itself to be pierced through, rather than not defend the Body; for the Whole is actuated by one Mind. So it ought also to be in the Church of Christ.

Query IV.

Doth the Payment of Tythes by some Quakers, tend to encrease the Sufferings of those, who for Conscience Sake cannot pay the same?

Answer.

Answer.

The Question that is so commonly put to the faithful Testimony-bearers, why cannot you pay as well as such an one your Neighbour, who is of your Society, a very honest and good Sort of a Man, and has no Scruple? Plainly shews that the Compliance of some under our Name with the Payment, hath a tendency to encrease the Sufferings of those, who conscientiously refuse to pay. For indeed, the natural Effect of such Compliance is, to weaken in the Eyes of the World our true Plea of Conscience; and to confirm our Adversaries in the false Opinion, which they often broach, that the Refusal of the Quakers to pay Tythes, is more owing to the peculiar Rules and Policy of the Society, than to a real Scruple of Conscience in the Individuals; and that a Steadiness in Refusal is the Effect of Obstinacy or Bigotry. Therefore every Instance of a Compliance hath a Tendency to give our Adversaries Cause of Triumph and Hope, to strengthen their Hands, and harden their Hearts against the faithful Sufferers. And certainly, no Weapon, ever yet formed against us, has been so piercing to the Sufferers, as this, which has been put into the Hands of our Adversaries, by Members of our own Body. Yet it is the incumbent Duty of each Member, to vindicate the Cause of every suffering Brother: But how can those help to do this, who are daily giving up the Cause for which the faithful Members suffer?

There

There have been divers Instances of Persons among us, who, on their Death-beds have had sorely to lament that they had paid, or consented to others paying for them, these antichristian Demands. The following remarkable one was published by Friend's Printer in the Year 1710.

*The dying Testimony and Exercise of William Fisher,
concerning the Payment of Tythes.*

I *William Fisher* of *Ross*, in the County of *Hereford*, being weak in Body, but of a right Understanding in Mind, having been sorely afflicted in Mind and Conscience, since my late and present Weakness, in my consenting to my Son's paying of my Tythes for me; which has been such a Terror to me, and has wounded my Conscience so, that I could not take my natural Rest; and has caused me to give out this Paper, as an Acknowledgement of my Condemnation for so doing; I desire all others, who profess the Lord's everlasting Truth, may take Warning by me in this my known Transgression, and bear their Testimony more faithful for the Lord against the grand Oppression of Tythes; that so they may be more easy, and of a more composed and retired Mind; upon a dying Bed, than I have been since the Terrors of the Lord have followed me, in giving Way to that Delusion: The which, if it was to do again, I would not pay it for all the World. I desiring, and often supplicating the Lord, in this Time of my Weakness, and before, to forgive me for this my great Transgression in paying of Tythes. And I
D desire

desire the Prayers to the Lord of all my true and honest hearted Friends and Brethren, that he would be pleased in Mercy to pass by and forgive me for this my Sin and Transgression, that so I may obtain true Peace with the Lord my Saviour. And now, having great Satisfaction in publishing what is before written, do I subscribe my Name to this,

The 8th Day of 1 Mo.
1708|9.

William Fisher.

Witnesses, *Joseph Cowles, Jonah Cator, &c.*

The unanimous and concurrent Testimony of our worthy Friends, from the Beginning both in their private, and in their united Capacity as a Society, together with the great Fight of Affliction our early Friends endured, even to the Loss of many of their Lives in Prisons and Dungeons, in maintaining this noble Testimony for the Liberty of the Gospel, against the antichristian Yoke of Tythes, ought, in Reason and the Nature of Things, to have a peculiar Weight with those who now profess the same Principles; seeing the contrary Practice is no less than trampling upon their Blood, as it were, and censuring them as Fools, for exposing themselves to such great Sufferings unnecessarily. To mention Half the Particulars relating to the above, would make a large Volume. I would therefore recommend, especially to the Youth, the reading our Friend's Books on this Subject, and the Epistles of our yearly Meeting from their first Establishment; wherein they who are
rightly

rightly disposed to receive true Information, may perceive it is no light Thing to trample upon this precious Testimony.

The Discipline of the Society, in censuring Tythepayers, vindicated.

The next Thing to be considered is the Discipline, or Manner of dealing with the unfaithful Members, who continue in the Practice of paying Tythes, in Opposition to the Advice of Friends and to the fundamental Principles of the Society.

The Minute of the yearly Meeting, 1706, is the most particularly descriptive of the Manner of dealing with, and censuring those who will not be reclaimed from their sorrowful Defection; and at the same Time breathes a truly Christian Spirit of Tenderness and Forbearance towards the Unfaithful.

It is in the following Words. " This Meeting
" doth earnestly recommend to the several quarterly
" and monthly Meetings, that they be careful and
" diligent to make general Observations, how Friends
" do answer and bear up their Testimony against
" Tythes in their Practice: And if they shall find
" any going under our Name, that do either pay or
" receive Tythes, that they use their best and utmost
" Endeavours, in the Spirit and Order of the Gospel,
" and in the Exercise of great Tenderness and
" brotherly Kindness to inform, convince, exhort,
" admonish and reprove all such, without Respect of
D 2 " Persons,

“ Persons, as they see Cause, in Order to gain and
 “ bring them to the Acknowledgement and Obedi-
 “ ence of the Truth, in that Particular: And if after
 “ such tender and gentle Dealing with them, any such
 “ continue in their Unfaithfulness, that then the
 “ Meeting having exercised christian Charity and
 “ Forbearance towards such, and finding themselves
 “ clear in the Sight of God, do manifest and declare,
 “ that such for their Unfaithfulness and Opposition
 “ to that our christian Testimony, are unworthy to
 “ be admitted to the Meetings for Business, or to be
 “ received to join in the Collections made by
 “ Friends, for the Service of the Church of Christ:
 “ And if after that such Persons shall persist in such
 “ their Unfaithfulness and Opposition, that then the
 “ Meeting proceed further in the Lord’s Power to
 “ give Judgement, for the clearing of Truth and
 “ Friends as in the holy Fear, Council and Wis-
 “ dom of God, they shall be directed and guided
 “ therein.”

The foregoing Minute of 1706, appears to me to
 be couched in the Language of Truth: And I verily
 believe it was dictated by best Wisdom. Yet it hath
 been objected to by some, as too severe and not adapted
 to the present State of Things: For altho’ say they
 it might be the Sense of Friends then, the Wisdom
 of the Society would not approve of such a Minute
 now; and how little Regard has been paid to it, ap-
 pears from its having never been put into Practice,
 To these Objections I answer, that the Substance of
 them was stated by a quarterly Meeting a few Years
 ago,

ago, and laid before the yearly Meeting in Order to take the present Sense of that Meeting thereon: Who referred the said quarterly Meeting for Direction how to deal with the Unfaithful, to the sundry Minutes of the yearly Meeting on that Head, particularly the Minute of 1706: Whereby this Minute is confirmed; as to its having never been put into Practice; the Assertion cannot be proved, for I have been certainly informed of divers Instances where it has been put in Practice, so far as to deny the Collections of Tythe-payers, and to refuse them to sit in Meetings for Business; and even of some who have been proceeded against to Disownment.

The first Step to be taken in dealing with the Unfaithful, is Admonition: in which Friends are to use their best Endeavours, in the Spirit and Order of the Gospel, and in the Exercise of Tendernefs and brotherly Kindness to inform, convince, exhort, admonish and reprove all such, without Respect of Persons, in Order to gain and bring them to the Acknowledgement and Obedience of the Truth in this Matter. In this Work of admonishing, Friends have laboured more or less in most Places, I believe, where Occasion has required, and one Reason why a Proceeding to censure those Tythe-payers, who, will not be reclaimed by the gentle Means of Admonition, has not been more general, appears to me to be, that the previous Labour of Admonition has not been so closely attended to, as to clear the Minds of Friends for further Proceedings: For the Work being hard and unpleasant, Friends have been discouraged; and those !

those who have been engaged in it, have found it very close and painful Labour, to deal with those whom Custom has settled in that great Defection, and over whose Minds Numbness, Darkness and Insensibility have prevailed, so as to make them very hard to be reached.

But where this Labour has been often repeated and long continued, even until those who are engaged in it find their Minds fully clear, I see not how any, who consider the Fitness of Things, can think some Degree of Censure avoidable. For my Part, I think it might have been better not to have begun to deal with the Unfaithful at all, than to leave them where they were found, or perhaps, in a more obdurate State; for they who reject much christian Admonition, of Course grow harder and more insensible. This Conduct would also be like giving up the Cause, and a tacit Acknowledgement that the Unfaithful had obtained the Victory over Truth's Testimony: It would establish the Tythe-payers and their Successors in their great Defection: It would incorporate the Faithful and the Unfaithful in one religious Society. Such an Incorporation obtained among them from whom we, as a People, were called to separate; and if it should so obtain among us, would in Process of Time make it necessary for them, who embrace the Truth as it is in Jesus to separate from us.

Some have objected that their Parents were Men of Honour and good Esteem, and yet always paid Tythes; and that divers of those who are in the
same

same Practice now, are as honourable and as well accounted of among Men, as those who refuse to pay; and from thence argued, it should seem that the paying Tythes did not make the Payers worse than other Men; and that therefore all should be left to their Liberty in such indifferent Things. I answer, that in respect to the moral Character of some, I believe the Allegation is true. I know several whom I love and esteem for their Justice and Punctuality, and as far as it appears to me, for the Soundness of their Morals; and this is so far very becoming and commendable: Yet no more than what I believe might be said with Truth of Numbers of those, with whose religious Principles in general we can have no Unity: Than what may be true of many Papists, Mahometans, and even Pagans. Men may be in a good Degree sound in their Morals, without being sound in their religious Principles, or without being faithful to those they profess, when these Principles are right in themselves; and therefore when any Man is under dealing for acting contrary to the religious Principles which he professes, the Rectitude of his Morals in other Respects cannot be a good Plea; for the Question here, is not about Morals, but about a Breach of religious Principles. Now, as every Society hath certain Bonds, by which its several Members are tied together, and united into one Body; so the Bonds of a religious Society are those Principles and Practices, which are essential and fundamental to it: And the fundamental Principle of our Society is the Belief in the Manifestation, and immediate Teaching of the holy Spirit, the free Grace of God

to all Mankind individually. This is the Basis of our Religion, and the Bond of our Union : And the Payment of Tythes for the Support of an hireling Ministry can never be reconciled to it. Since therefore such Payment is incompatible with the Principles we profess, and contrary to the Sense, Judgement and Practice of all upright Friends, as will abundantly appear from a careful Perusal of the Advices of the yearly Meeting on this Head, contained in the printed yearly Epistles ; let every Tythe-payer ask himself, how can I continue a real and useful Member of that religious Society, from whose fundamental Principles I have departed ? And let him consider that it is equally absurd for him to pretend that he doth not differ from the Brethren in Faith, while he differs from them in Practice ; for Works are the only certain Evidence of Faith,

That the Defection of particular Persons may greatly affect a Community, appears by the Case of *Achan*, recorded in the 7th Chap. of *Joshua*, and that of the Tribe of *Benjamin* recorded in the 19 and 20th Chap. of *Judges*. And under this Consideration there appears sufficient Cause, for those who are concerned to work out their own Salvation, and to be clear of the Blood of all Men in the great Day of Account, to be very vigilant and watchful, lest they suffer Sin to remain uncondemned either in themselves or others. For even the old Law commands,
 * “ *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour,*
“ and

* Levit. 19. 17.

“ and not suffer Sin upon him.” And in the new Law we have ample Directions upon this Head, both from the great Lawgiver himself, and his Apostles; one of whom exhorts those who are qualified to watch over the Flock, as they that must give an Account. When Things are viewed in this Light, by those who have the Weight of the Care of the Church, and God’s Glory laid upon them, there is no middle Choice. They must either discharge their Duty faithfully in the Exercise of Gospel Order, and in placing Judgement upon wrong Things; in doing which the Meek are guided by unerring Wisdom, whereby lasting Peace is obtained: Or they must hazard the Loss of that incomparable Felicity, if they flatter the Unfaithful and Disorderly, to obtain a temporary Peace and Friendship with them.

The second Step in dealing with the Tythe-payers is the Censure directed to be laid upon such of them, as will not hear, and be reclaimed by Admonition, “ If after such tender and gentle Dealings with them, “ any such shall continue in their Unfaithfulness, that “ then the Meeting having exercised christian Charity and Forbearance towards such, and finding “ themselves clear in the Sight of God, do manifest “ and declare, that such for their Unfaithfulness and “ Opposition to that our christian Testimony, are “ unworthy to be admitted to the Meetings for Business, or to be received to join in the Collections “ made by Friends for the Service of the Church of “ Christ.”

Let us now consider the Nature and Reasonableness of that gentle and necessary Censure, which is directed to be laid by the monthly Meetings upon some of the most obdurate Tythe-payers, in Conformity to the above recited Minute: And first of refusing their Collections for the Service of the Church of Christ.

This is a Step which cannot be attended with any real Injury to the Parties thus dealt with, but must surely afford them a convincing Proof of the Disinterestedness of the Society, and the Earnestness of its Desire to promote the good of all its Members. When they reflect on the repeated Labours extended towards them; when they find that their Friends are willing, nay determined, to sacrifice their own outward Interest in Order to afford them Conviction, and regulate their Conduct in a Matter so essential, surely they must see the real Motive of such Labour and Sacrifice; and perhaps be thereby led to a still deeper Enquiry and more solid Consideration: Our Society as is well known hath from its first Rise, earnestly pleaded for a free, disinterested Ministry, which agreeable to the Institution of our great Lord and Lawgiver, is sent and furnished by him immediately, upon all Occasions. He has promised to be with his Ministers always to the End of the World; and as this Promise will certainly be fulfilled, there is no Need to be at any Cost to train them up in the Schools of Men for that Work. This human Method of training up Men to the Ministry, was the Invention of Antichrist. When the Fountain of
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living Water had been forsaken ; and as such Training up, like to that of other Trades, is attended with considerable Expence, Tythes and other Demands upon the People were contrived for the Support of the Ministry, then ordained by Men ; and with a worldly Maintenance all Things became worldly and carnal in the Church of Antichrist. Who, therefore, that hath but even a small Glimpse of the Nature of that hireling Ministry, which is substituted in the Stead of the true Ministry of Christ, can in the least contribute towards the Support of it, without Sin ? The Testimony of Friends hath been always full and clear against it, and was borne in early Times through very grievous Sufferings, even to the Loss of the outward Substance, of the Liberty, and even of the Lives of many. For the Payment of Tythes, and other Stipends, upholds this mercenary Ministry ; and their Ministry upholds their Worship, for the People seem to have no Notion of performing any public Worship, without the Help of a Minister : And do we suppose that a Worship upheld by such Means is acceptable to him, who must be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth : The hireling Ministry, and the free Ministry of the Gospel are incompatible, and ever tending to destroy each other. Pray, therefore, consider ! Can it be reasonable in the Nature of Things, for a Man to contradict himself so far ; especially in a Case where Religion is so deeply concerned, as to support at once two contrary Things, where the Promotion of the one is in Effect the laying waste of the other ? For my Part I can see no good End it can answer, to uphold our Dissent from the national Wor-

ship, if we let fall our Testimony against Tythes, and consequently against an hireling Ministry.

As to the Uses our Collections are put to: A chief and noble One is the voluntary supporting our Poor: This undoubtedly had its Foundation in the Love of God: That there might be no Beggar in our *Israel*, nor any be reduced to the Necessity of having their Wants supplied by those who are not in the Unity of the same Body; and for this Reason we are not free to receive the Collections of People who are not of us. And if it be said this is not the Case with our Tythe-payers, who, tho' they fail in this Point, we must own are of us: I answer if this Point, wherein they fail, be of such a Nature as to tend to lay waste the Society, as I shall account the Payment of Tythes to be, until the contrary be proved. There is then the same Reason for refusing their Collections, as for refusing the Collections of those of the national Church; for as the Payers of Tythes contribute to the Support of the principal Pillars of that Ministry and Worship, the Upholding whereof tends to the Destruction of our Society, they surely resemble them more than us, for as to their owning the other Branches of our christian Testimony, this may be the Effect of Education, and of the teaching of others, and therefore too superficial to enable them to hazard, for the Sake thereof the Loss of a little outward Substance or Liberty; and it seems most likely if the same Trials were to attend the other Branches, as now attend that of Tythes and Warden's Rates, that they would be given up presently in like Manner.

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Nor is this an harsh and uncharitable Opinion ; because they generally have discovered a very great Indifference for the supporting of divers other Branches, wherein there has been any Cross to bear. But, indeed, if all the Branches of our Testimony were owned, and exactly conformed unto, merely in the Strength and Will of the Creature, from Convincement and literal Knowledge only, without witnessing a Measure of the Light and Power of the holy Spirit to lead thereinto, and to enable to maintain them faithfully, notwithstanding the Sufferings and Opposition to be met with : I see very little, if any, Advantage it would be, either to our Society or to Mankind in general, to maintain them after this Manner only.

It hath been alledged by some, that as there are unworthy Poor supported by the Society ; there seems little Occasion to be so exact in regard to the Contributors, tho' some of them also may be deemed unworthy. Answer, Let us remember our Lord's Saying it is more blessed to give than to receive. And the Unworthiness of some of our Poor may be owing to a Neglect of a seasonable Exertion of Discipline, whereby perhaps the Individuals have sustained a great Loss in their spiritual Condition, as a timely Admonition might have been a probable Means of reclaiming them. Such Assistance from the spiritual-minded, hath sometimes proved successful in restoring them, who have been overtaken with Faults : And if it had happened otherwise, and the Society had discharged its Duty, so as to be clear, such disorderly Walkers might have been justly disowned. But where this
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necessary and christian Care hath been neglected in its due Season, the Rules of our Discipline doth not allow Friends to disown any for former Offences, when they come to want, that they may not be supposed to act from the dishonourable Motive of saving their Pockets. Besides from the Nature of the Thing it is scarce possible, but that the general Rule made for the whole Body, may be attended with some Inconvenience in particular Instances; yet surely, it cannot be prudent for the Society to deviate from its original Intention in the Support of its Poor, by admitting unworthy Contributors because there are a few unworthy Receivers.

Besides the Support of our Poor, there are divers other Uses to which our Collections are applied: But I shall only mention two, the first is, to print and distribute Books and Epistles for the Promotion of Truth, and to testify against antichristian Superstition and Errors; and against none hath Friend's Testimony gone forth with more Earnestness, than against Tythes and Priestcraft, because, these always were the Bane of genuine Christianity. But can they who help to uphold Tythes and Priestcraft, be proper Persons to assist in testifying against them?

The other Use of our Collections is to defray the Expences of public Friend's Horses, and their own also, when in travelling they have to lodge at Inns; and also to pay for their Passage over the Sea, when Occasion so requires, and they are not of Ability to bear such heavy Expences themselves, without Injury
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to their Families: For it has always been allowed by us, "That the Workman is worthy of his Meat." But can they, who actively contribute to the Support of an antichristian, hireling Ministry, be proper Persons to assist in defraying such Expences? Or can we suppose they, who (as it were) put their Lives in their Hands to run on the Lord's Errands, could be free and easy to accept of the Assistance of such?

And further with Sorrow of Heart it may be observed, that these Violaters of our Testimony have discovered too much of a dark, carnal Spirit. Whence, if the living, faithful Body were to unite with them in such excellent Services, it might make them appear, to themselves as well as to others, of more Importance to the Society than they really are: And this unjust Opinion of their State would be attended with bad Consequences, both to themselves in particular, and to the Society in general; and tend to establish them in their deplorable Defection, as I believe it hath done already. For some of them have been observed rather to exult, as if the Society could not spare their Collections. Yet surely, if the Tythe-payers were to bear all the Expences of the Society, this would not contravail the Damage they do it, by violating this precious Testimony.

Let the foregoing Observations suffice on the Subject of refusing the Collections of those, who, after due Admonition, continue in the Practice of paying Tythes, which is one Part of the Censure due to them.

them. The next Step consists in refusing such, the Liberty of sitting in our Meetings for Business.

It seems to me exceeding inconsistent and unreasonable, that they who live in the repeated Practice of laying waste, and destroying any Branch of that ancient, christian Testimony, which we (as well as our Ancestors) have to bear, should be allowed to attend those Meetings, which were appointed to take Care that the Members of our Society do not violate that Testimony, and those Principles we have professed to believe ever since we were a People. For what Benefit or Advantage can their Attendance bring? Can they consistently be employed in the Service of the Church, who are afraid of suffering alittle in their Property for the Truth's Sake? Or are they fit to endeavour to reclaim others, who are themselves such bad Examples, and so deficient in their known Duty? I cannot see how they who are sensible of their Deficiency and wrong Conduct, can desire or offer to attend or act in those Meetings. The not admitting them to sit in Meetings of Discipline, may have something more harsh in its first Appearance; but perhaps, when attentively viewed thro' a proper Medium, much of its apparent Severity will disappear.

It is generally allowed that such Persons as are not clear in this Respect, ought not to be appointed to any Office in the Church,—or in other Words, are not proper to be active Members: Some of the Unfaithful themselves will allow this; and (perhaps from this Consciousness) generally avoid attending these Meet-
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ing; but let it be considered that when a monthly Meeting is constituted by the Clerk's entering on Record, the Names of those present, every Member there in that Circumstance becomes a Part of that Meeting, and each is virtually an active Member; either by Consent, or Opposition, every Act of the Whole necessarily supposes a Concurrence of the Parts that compose it. He, either by speaking to the Matters that come before it, or by the Consent of Silence, contributes his Assistance to every Act of that Meeting, which he does not publicly oppose.

Suppose therefore for Instance, a monthly Meeting held wherein sat two or three Tythe-payers; and that this Meeting were to appoint a Committee to visit, and labour with their unfaithful Members: In that Case such an Appointment would be virtually an Act, of the Tythe-payers themselves in Conjunction with the rest, unless they publicly opposed such an Appointment. This appears to me to be an evident Inconsistency. If they did publicly oppose such Appointment, they would thereby openly proclaim themselves Opposers of, and in that Point Enemies to, the faithful Brethren; and consequently must be very improper Persons to sit as Judges in the Church. If they did not oppose such Appointment, then they would tacitly condemn their own Conduct, by virtually joining in the Appointment of others to deal with themselves, for a Practice which if they think is right, they ought not to have a Hand in censuring; and which if they are convinced is wrong, equally disqualifies them for the Office they

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fill, even by their own Acknowledgement. It is evident that such cannot properly sit as active Members in Meetings of Discipline; and from the foregoing Remarks that when there, they cannot be neuter. They must either by Silence or Speech agree to, or oppose every Act of that Meeting, whereof they are a Part. Therefore I think it evidently appears, that such cannot with Propriety sit there at all: And that the refusing them this Privilege is not only consistent in itself, but also the unavoidable Consequence of their own Conduct, which first disqualifies them to enjoy it. But some may say, they are not convinced that they ought to refuse the Payment of Tythes, this, may be the Case with some; I desire such to consider, that as far as any are not convinced of our Principles, so far they are not properly of our Society, nor do strictly belong to us, as being of another Perswasion and Judgement, and therefore they have no Reason to complain, if they are not allowed to sit in Meetings, that are appointed to take Care of the due Observance of those Principles, which they do not believe. This Difference in Opinion, if the Party was born in the Society, must proceed either from their Parent's Neglect in not bringing them up in the Knowledge and Belief of our Principles, or to their own Unwatchfulness, by which they have lost their former and better Condition, and have given the Enemy an Opportunity to darken their Minds, and render them unable to see, and embrace the Truth as it is in Jesus. But let their Disbelief of any of our Doctrines proceed from
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which Cause it may, the Society is not answerable: It must and ought to lie at their Doors, who are the Cause of it.

Others may object, that the Payers of Tythes have been always admitted to sit in Meetings for Discipline, and that it is an Innovation to exclude them. Answer, it is not likely that the Payers of Tythes, if any such there were, offered to attend those Meetings for many Years after they were first established; because the zealous Concern, that prevailed at that Time, scarcely would have admitted such a Mixture of lukewarm Professors, with the Professors of Truth. And if the misplaced Indulgence of latter Times has allowed it, this doubtless has tended greatly to the Hurt of those who regard their Principles, and of those who do not. For that Spirit of Indifference, which reigns in the latter, will always lie as a Burden, a dead Weight, and a Hinderance upon those who have the Cause of God at Heart, and labour for its Promotion: While at the same Time, the receiving of unbelieving or unfaithful Members, as if they were in full Unity and Communion, and of one Heart and Mind with their Brethren (like the Disciples of old) when they were not so; seems a Procedure most likely to confirm them in their Unbelief, and to hinder their making a Search into themselves, to see whether all Things be right with them: Which they may probably do, when they are justly treated like Persons of a different Perswasion from their Friends, in an Article that always has been regarded as an Essential of our Society.

Therefore, if such Persons have been allowed to attend our Meetings for Discipline a long Time, that is no Reason for a Continuance, but rather a Reason for the Discontinuance of it now; for as that Indulgence has been tried, and most likely done more Harm than Good; it is high Time to try whether a contrary Method may not have a better Effect, and be of more Service to the whole Body conjunctively.

Besides, the different State of the Church, and Dispensation it may be under at various Times and Seasons, may require different Rules and Regulations for the Government of it, suitable to its present Exigences; and yet all proceeding from the same unerring Spirit: The History of the Church of God in Ages past, plainly evinces this. We live at present in more Ease, and Freedom from outward Persecution, than formerly; and if Friends will not be faithful, and bear that little, in Comparison of what it was, which it is still our Lot to suffer; there is greater Need than ever for some to stand in the Gap, and to maintain our Discipline, in Order to prevent a further and more general Declension and Falling away from our first Love and Principles; and for that Purpose the Lord is laying a Concern upon some to be zealous for his Truth, and to establish good and useful Regulations, which may serve as an Hedge about us, and as a Barrier, to keep out those, who, by their Examples and Councils, might be a Means of hindring a Growth and Encrease in the blessed Truth, by slighting and disregarding any Branch of its Testimony.

It may be further objected, that the Refusal of paying Tythes, and those called Church-rates, is not a material Point, nor a fundamental Doctrine of ours; and therefore every one should be left to their Liberty in that Respect. Answer, all our Friends' Writings unanimously demonstrate, that from the Time of our first being a separate People unto this Day, it has ever been the invariable Sense of our Society, both in its collective capacity, and as Individuals, that we cannot pay Tythes, without making ourselves Hypocrites and Transgressors, by supporting and building up what we once endeavoured to destroy, or turn away from; and that our Predecessors, who bore the Heat of the Day, suffered deeply about forty Years on this Account. And shall we their Descendants be guilty of trampling upon their Blood, and despising their Testimony, for which they suffered so greatly, by cruel Beatings, Stonings, and Draggings by the Hair of their Heads, till they were left for dead, and insensible through Bruises and Loss of Blood, and by long and hard Imprisonments in noisom Dungeons, for declaring as they were commanded of the Lord, against the formal, false and hypocritical Will-worship, of hireling Teachers, in the Face of them, and their deluded Hearers, in their high Places? Would it not have seemed strange to these suffering faithful Servants of God, to have been told by their Brethren, or those who pretended to be such, that it was of no Consequence, or not at all material whether they paid a Part of their outward Substance, wherewith the Lord had blessed them, to maintain and uphold this very Worship,
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and these Teachers? Would not this have looked like downright Mockery? And can it be called by softer Terms than a Trampling upon their Blood, and despising their Testimony; if we act so directly opposite to that for which they suffered so much, as to contribute our Money to support what they saw in the Light of the Lord, was an Abomination to him, and as such were constrained by his Power to testify against at the Hazard of their Lives, from the Fury of an enraged Multitude of wicked Worshippers, and their Priests? Yet our Friends were at Times miraculously preserved from the natural Effects of their abuse and violence, and healed by that almighty Power, in which they trusted.

I would entreat those who make the aforementioned Objections, to lay to Heart, and consider well what is the Cause of their disregarding this, and perhaps some other of our Principles as light and indifferent Matters, which they may either practise or not, as they chuse, without a Breach of their Christian Fellowship and Communion. Is it not owing, to a Want of a religious Concern, that they may be found faithful to what they know already, which is the Way to be favoured with a further Manifestation of their Duty? To not being in the Practice of a constant, humble, awful Waiting upon the Lord, to know his Mind and Will, and of frequent reading the Holy Scriptures? To not taking diligent Heed to that divine Principle of Light, Life and Grace, from which all our Principles or Doctrine flow, as Water from the Spring.

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It has been said that a third Step is directed by this Minute, viz. A total Exclusion from Membership, if the preceeding Steps do not effect the End proposed. There is indeed something further pointed at : But as that is referred to the Meetings as in the Wisdom and Council of the most High, they shall be directed therein : I think it is safely left, as the Counsel and Wisdom of the most High can never direct improperly. I hope if the monthly Meetings attend faithfully to the forepart of this Minute, the intended End may thereby be generally answered, neither is this latter Part our present Business.

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